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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1338  
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 2911  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 1694  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3581  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 0217  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1343  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5027  
RUEHQH/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1671  
RUEFAITA/CIA WASHDC  
RHMFIS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 000618

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/12/2017  
TAGS: PGOV PREL CT  
SUBJECT: NEW CHILEAN DEFENSE MINISTER TAKES THE HELM

REF: A) SANTIAGO 500

Classified By: Ambassador Craig Kelly for reasons 1.5 (b and d).

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) New Minister of Defense Goni told the Ambassador his initial focus would be on strengthening Chile's regional military-to-military tie  
¶2. (U) On April 13, the Ambassador called on newly appointed Minister of Defense Jose "Goni" Carrasco, who was appointed to the position on

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Making Nice with the Neighborhood  
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¶3. (C) Goni said that he was under instruction from President Bachelet to "build bridges" to Chile's neighbors, including Peru, Bolivia and  
¶4. (C) Goni, who had been serving as Chile's ambassador to Mexico when Bachelet tabbed him as MinDef, reviewed the state of Chilean-Mexican re  
¶5. (C) Goni said relations with Bolivia were good, with a focus on confidence building measures (CBMs). He described the Bolivian press as la  
¶6. (C) The MinDef said he would meet with Peruvian MinDef Wagner the following week. Relations with Peru were also stable, noting the visit t  
¶7. (C) On Argentina, Goni pointed to "great cooperation" in developing with Buenos Aires a joint peacekeeping battalion. It would be operati  
¶8. (C) The Ambassador observed that mil-to-mil relations were often key to establishing partnerships that could withstand political or economi

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The Chilean Way  
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¶9. (C) Asked for USG views on Ecuador, the Ambassador replied that "We want to keep the door open." Commercial disputes involving American fi  
13 meeting between Secretary Rice and FM Foxley going on "as we speak" - are proof. We support Chile improving relations with its neighbors

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SOFA  
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¶10. (C) The Ambassador commented that the U.S., while clearly interested in entering into a long-term SOFA with Chile, understood the need to

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Helicopter Purchases  
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¶11. (C) The Ambassador asked about the status of Chilean military interest in upgrading its helicopter fleet. He noted U.S. manufacturers Sik  
packages. The Mission was prepared to facilitate ongoing discussions. Goni replied he had a lot on his plate and wasn't familiar with the issue

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Copper Law  
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¶12. (C) Goni told the Ambassador he was studying various reform proposals to Chilean legislation which now requires that ten percent of copper  
¶13. (C) The Ambassador concluded the meeting by expressing appreciation for Chilean support for MINUSTAH and agreed with Goni that it would be

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Comment  
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¶14. (C) Goni appeared up to speed on most issues, although still reading in. He was surprisingly unenthusiastic regarding prospects for a long  
March visit there had clearly impressed the President, leading her to offer him this key portfolio. Endcomment.  
KELLY